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Her  
Caveman's Letters  
And Her's In Reply

Swift - Steele

1

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★ PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

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1914

1914



*Her Caveman's Letters  
and  
Her's In Reply*

*“Still on thy breast enamoured let me lie,  
Still drink delicious poison from thine eye.”*

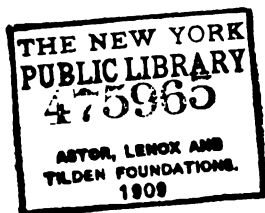
FROM  
“ELOISE AND ABELARD,”  
BY  
ALEXANDER POPE.

Her  
Caveman's Letters  
and Her's In Reply

By  
Lance Swift and Carol Steele

PHILADELPHIA  
GILLAM'S SONS COMPANY  
1908  
d. r.





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*"The little gods, light hov'ring in the air,  
Twang their silk bow-strings and their aims pre-  
pare;  
Some on th' immortal anvils point the dart  
With powers resistless to inflame the heart;  
Their arrow heads they dip with soft desires  
And all the warmth of love's celestial fires;  
Some sprinkle o'er the shafts the tears of woe,  
Some store the quiver, some steel-spring the bow;  
Each chanting as he works the tuneful strain  
Of love's dear joys, of love's luxurious pain."*

FROM  
"THE LUSIAD"  
OF  
LUIS DE CAMOENS



*From Him*

**D**EAR MADAM:—The day before yesterday Mr. Boynton and I were at luncheon together. "I have just received," said he, after we had considered a legal matter concerning which he wished a bit of advice, "some unusually fine sketches in oil from a lady whom Mrs. Boynton and I have known since she was a little girl, a lady who is as amiable as she is talented"—those were his words; prompted, his eyes revealed, by very happy reflections. "I am going to use the pictures," he went on, "in the mid-summer number of the magazine."

"I should," said I, "like to look at them."

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

We went from the restaurant to Mr. Boynton's office and he placed before me your Cairo pictures. I spent a few weeks in that exceedingly interesting city not long ago. Of late years I have been a good deal in the studios of some of my artist friends here.

As a result, quite likely, of these apparently unrelated facts, I ventured one or two thoughts concerning your most unusual canvases.

"You are right," said our mutual friend. "A few strokes of her brush will suffice to make the changes. You must write to her yourself," he added, "and tell her exactly what you have told me. Yes, yes," he insisted, "you must do it—positively must, if not as my friend, then as my attorney."

And so it came about that I am writing, as Mr. Boynton's friend you may be sure, to a lady of rare ability whom I have never had the privilege of meeting. With

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

my note I am sending to you a few type-written memoranda that I beg you will not consider as obtrusively offered even though you may deem them ill advised and not at all desirable to adopt.

Please let me add that your work is most admirable, most praiseworthy, and indicates a mental grasp of things possessed by few.

I am confident your winter's sojourn in Northern Africa and Palestine must have been a very delightful and inspiring season.

With the kindest regards, I am,

Most sincerely yours,

BRUCE MACMAHON.



*From Her,*

**M**Y DEAR SIR:—For days, weeks I had striven for them—the subtle, life-giving lines that a few words of your dictation clarified in my mind and enabled my fingers to create.

How meagre is the language a woman can employ when she desires to tell a man she is grateful to him. I *liked* my pictures before you imbued them with real vitality. To think of them now thrills me.

And you who can do such things—you with the artist's feel for subtleties—are a lawyer and vex mankind with "the law's delay" instead of kindling the fires of emotion with fine ideals masterfully expressed.

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

It is incongruous.

Somewhere in the arrangement of things there has been a mistake made.

In a measure—though ever so small a measure—I can, if you will help me, correct the error. Here before me are half a dozen things which I greatly desire to send on to you. In each something is lacking, some essential touch which eludes me though I wear myself out striving for it.

Will you not tell me, as you have done with the Cairo studies, what it is that defies and derides? May I send them?

I have no apology to make for writing to you as I have done, nor even for this, in a measure, unwarranted request that I am making. But believe me, it is the artist who is writing to the artist—not the woman to a stranger.

Gratefully and cordially yours,  
ELEANOR VAUNTON PHELPS.



*From Him*

**M**Y DEAR MRS. PHELPS:—I will not believe it was the artist *per se* and in nowise the woman who set down the words which gratify at the same time they abash me. I do not want to believe it. In your letter which I have re-read a number of times I feel the presence of the same inspiring personality which endows your brush with its chiefest power.

But for goodness sake take me down from the pedestal. I'm not used to it. Until your letter came no one had ever hinted that I was even a near-genius.

By all means send the pictures along. I shall examine them with the deepest in-

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

terest and count it a high privilege if, in the smallest measure, I may be of any real service to you.

Faithfully yours,

BRUCE MACMAHON.





*From Her*

**M**Y DEAR MR. MACMAHON:—The canvases went off by express this morning. I need not tell you that on each one I put more time and expended greater effort than upon any of the sketchy things Mr. Boynton placed before you. In fact, the ones which ought to reach you to-morrow or the next day reveal my first *real* effort at painting. So you may imagine the anxiety with which I shall await your criticisms. You know I have not, and, probably, never shall enter the charmed circle of “painters by profession,” and I’m sure the heart of the amateur, the novice beats ever so much harder, faster than the

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more contained and self-reliant heart of one who is sure of himself, confident of his work.

But it is foolish for me thus to bespeak kindness at your hands, when, down in the analytical chamber of my mind I recognize fully that in brutality will lie the only true charity. And so, tear them to shreds if needful, but do, please do send them back tied up in pretty ribbons of hope.

Most cordially yours,

ELEANOR PHELPS.



*From Him*

**M**Y DEAR MRS. PHELPS:—I have looked over the paintings which came this afternoon. There are a few lines that, possibly, can be strengthened; some slight changes in color arrangements that perhaps you will want to consider—not because they will better your canvases a great deal, but chiefly because in reproduction the desired effects will be more clearly brought out. To-morrow I will sit down before the pictures and, with all possible care, write for you the memoranda which occur to me as worth being submitted.

But to-night I want to make a sugges-

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

tion not concerned with technique or detail. All of your subjects have been—how shall I put it?—removed, I will say, from the commonplace. Now I do not want to elate or depress you unduly, and it is, therefore, difficult to express, with nice balances, just the thoughts I would like to convey.

I do not believe that Millet at his best possessed a finer artistic temperament than that which clearly is inherent with you. I do not believe that his sense for line and color was happier than yours. And by good fortune you are not hampered more than was he by the arbitrariness of a conventional and didactic technique. But the man approached his work from a different point of view than you, so far as I can observe, have approached yours. It was the *point of view* which made him the foremost painter of his school. It is the point of view which is making you a

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woman of most unusual talent instead of a genius. If I could do ever so little to bring you around to the right viewpoint, I should consider the achievement its own reward—and a most liberal and gratifying reward. Let me try to make my meaning clear.

Instinctively you have chosen a Bedouin Chieftain, picturesque, striking in pose and apparel, for one of your canvases. He is unusual, interesting, entertaining—and it follows, therefor, that *you* have not *made* him so. But if you had selected, let us say, the fellah-boy who helped pull you up one or another of the pyramids, a creature upon whom the traveler usually looks with no other sentiment than fleeting pity—

In the Oriental stoicism, in the countless centuries of stolid indifference, in the thousands of years of hopelessness which you might have revealed in his face, in the



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dead lines of his anatomy, in the atmosphere which he himself creates and from which, therefore, he can by no endeavor escape—if you will put such things, which, though commonplace, are, and ever must be, sublimely tragic, into your pictures, then you will carry to the world messages that will at once be a warning and an inspiration—two things which it is man's nature always to desire; things which he always desires because he always needs them. You will not only stir emotions, you will not only thrill and entertain—you will uplift.

It seems a quality of woman's mind to forget—or, better perhaps, not to recognize—that the commonplace is essential. But it *is* and always has been and always must be. And it is the essential which affords the sublime themes for all the arts, whether painting, sculpture, drama, poetry, music. My earnest suggestion to you

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is to eliminate from your mind all things which are unusual and contemplate in the years to come the things which are most commonplace.

Your "Egyptian Dancer" delights the eye and pleasantly agitates the primal impulses. But, for my part, I believe the purpose to do the latter has been the fundamental error of Art from the day some semi-simian ancestor of yours and mine drew the first shapely limb on stone or tusk down to this particular spring when folks are poking fun at Mr. Comstock.

In my conception, the aim of Art should be to create and foster purposes and ideals which are economical or ethical or spiritual in their character, and not merely physical. Of course it is not to be denied that perpetuation of the Species is the highest duty of each generation. But the matter is one which Nature has taken care of fully and adequately. From the

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beginning to the present day, Art has had no part in preventing the suicide of the race, for the race cannot commit suicide. On the contrary, instead of performing such a function, the paintings and statues of many—most, I think I can say—of the geniuses and the mediocre have kindled a salacious flame conducive only to abuse of the highest functions.

By far the greater number of men and women are more material than intellectual or spiritual in their egos—I am; the very essence of the lines on your canvases reveals that you are. Because of this dominant element in our kind, the things, of whatever character, which pleasantly agitate the physical emotions are the things most ardently desired. Hence there are—at any rate there have been—greater rewards (not, perhaps, in dollars) for the artist who paints a Venus with lines which invite and flesh tints that urge, than for

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the man who paints "The Breaking of Home Ties." And so our geniuses of all ages have perpetuated their fame on canvases or in marble, which, owing to the inevitable association of ideas, stimulate in each sex an undue desire for closer association with its complement in nature—and which, for the multitude certainly, give rise to no other sentiment or desire.

Long ago the thing was carried into religious art (thank heaven it *was* long ago, and that it is less apparent now)—an art which manifestly should exalt only the spiritual and never stir the sensual emotions. The angels on many a canvas, not a few of the Madonnas, most of the women of the Bible, even some of the women associated, by the artists, with the Christ in one way or another—these have been painted and sculptured in such a way that—it is not a pleasant thing to put the thought on paper—they are more likely to

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excite the pulses than to engender celestial reflections. Necessarily I do not refer to all, but, I will put it, to a very considerable proportion of the religious works of the more notable and famous producers.

To the minds of virtually all devotees of Art all this, I know, is the extreme of banality. The school which was fathered by Phidias (perhaps it is not technically accurate to say "fathered" by him) and fostered by Titian and da Vinci and Rubens and Burne Jones and the galaxy of other illustrious ones has entrenched itself strongly. Whomsoever dares to question the sincerity or wisdom or righteousness of any of its canons or practices, is overwhelmed by the virulence of its abuse—an abuse which is made the more poignant by the lively, though inaccurate, intelligence and the super-abounding arrogance of the school. "He is grossly ignorant!" "He is a prude!" "He is himself

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a libertine and cannot see pure beauty in god-and-man-perfected anatomy!" "Ostracise him!"—these are a few of the slogans.

My dear Mrs. Phelps, the time for such a school to fool all the people all the time has passed. Folks are beginning to see things for themselves and they perceive that the modern disciples of ancient and mediæval ideas are plethorized with vanity but lacking the semblance of philosophy, bursting with buncombe but empty of horse sense.

And now it is after midnight and I have taken a good part of an evening to tell you that I'd rather you would paint for me—for everyone—a picture of some lowly cigarette girl at work in a Cairo loft than to reveal on your canvas the lines of your appealing "Egyptian Dancer."

By visualizing the human tragedy of a child doomed to toil and tears, a child

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whose natural heritage is sunshine and laughter, you can, with Art, true, lofty Art for your vehicle, reproach the world for its cruelty, and, perhaps—who knows?—do at least a little to ameliorate “Man’s inhumanity to man.”

Ever faithfully yours,

BRUCE MACMAHON.





*From Her*

**M**Y DEAR MR. MACMAHON:—I have heard of dentists who, by employing hypnotism, made the extracting of canines and molars a felicitous occasion for the extractee. But it has never before been my fortune to meet with a man who could gratify the vanity of one who aspires to be an artist at the time he was persuading—or *almost* persuading—her that a favorite picture is scarcely less than a monstrosity. By what manner of necromancy or diablerie do you coat with the sweetest of sugars your allopathic doses of criticism?

You have staggered, but you have not

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crushed me. I am not going to relinquish without a struggle the canons, as you call them, which are as old as the race, which have been taught by the greatest of masters and accepted by millions of intelligent pupils; which have, for centuries, had the approval of church and state, of learned men and good women, of Christian and Jew and pagan.

After all, I think there is a misunderstanding somewhere—not that your language is ambiguous, for never have I heard the case so plainly stated. But the very “essence” of your rhetoric—as you say of my lines—indicates that you cannot consistently quarrel with some of the phases of Art which, as I understand it, you condemn.

Unless my conceptions are all awry, the fundamental purposes of the men whose names you mention was not, in any sense, to arouse the impulses you refer to. On

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the contrary, I believe their masterful pieces of sculpture and their marvelous pictures were brought into being with exactly the opposite purpose in view. I believe "the contemplation of these perfect forms and features reveals we know not what of divine purpose for man, expressed in the noble form which the Creator has designed to bestow upon him. Through this contemplation the soul rises to hopes full of enthusiasm and goodness; for beauty is one and the same, under whatever form it presents itself, and ever excites the soul to religious emotions."

I cannot imagine what the world would be like if every representation of beauty were destroyed for no other reason than that it is revealed "in the image of the Creator." Surely there would be a dreadful, an appalling void.

No, I do not understand your attitude.

You would not put the Laocoon Group

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in tweeds nor Aphrodite in dimity—you are too big, too keen sighted a man for such pettiness. What is it then that you would do? You don't know how puzzled I am or how much I have concerned myself with irreconcilable ideas since your letter came. As I read it over, considering only the words in their relation to each other, I say "he is telling me that artists should throw away one of their primary colors." When, on the other hand, I think of you as you have revealed yourself in the few messages sent to me, I say "surely he is not the kind of man who would maim Art."

You, my friend and critic, have a soul; and when the soul is exalted by emotions which have their genesis in Beauty, there is no capacity in the individual for other than ennobling thoughts and reflections.

Do you recall the Parthenon Frieze?—of course you do, I did not mean it as a

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question. Tell me, is there in that spontaneous portrayal of a youthful nation's achievements and aspirations and religious fervor one thing in which the materialist can by any means view aught but sublime purity and ennobling sentiment? There in the Parthenon, centuries old, is revealed the apotheosis of naive art, and it is not believable that any mind can behold other than Beauty in the formidable young warriors, the sage elders, the powerful steeds, the animals decked for sacrifice, the bondsmen (more free than many a toiler in mill and factory to-day), the chariots, the maidens with offerings to their prototype, the virgin goddess—and all, all dedicated to Athene, their deity, the soul and inspiration of their city and their state.

Tell me, what conception is possible, in these sordid days, comparable with this inspiring portrayal of the very life of a virile people, a people destined to rule the

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world and extend an animating influence  
down through all the centuries?

Faithfully yours,

ELEANOR PHELPS.





*From Him*

**M**Y DEAR MRS. PHELPS:—No, I would not have you throw away one of your primary colors. I would not maim, nor would I unsex Art.

This is what I would do, if I could: I would have painters and sculptors reveal *womanhood* in their women and *manhood* in their men.

And I say to you with all the emphasis of which I am capable that since the days when pagan emperors viewed with critical eyes the processions of virgins and by a turn of their thumbs condemned gladiators to death; I say to you that since those days when man was altogether a

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physical animal, womanhood and manhood have not been symbolized by picturing the human body according to the most absurd of all the conceptions we have gotten from our Oriental neighbors—"in the image of the Creator."

One could look for nothing loftier when the race was entering its period of adolescence. Men were brutes then, and nothing more—for all of Socrates and Plato and Hillel and a few others who were beginning to get an understanding of the higher meaning of life. And it was for the brutes, for the dissolute patrician classes, that the sculptors of Athens and Rome gave abandon to their chisels. It was for nobody else and nothing else—prate as much as they may, in these wonderful days, of ancient devotion to ideals. It was the licentious nobleman who rewarded the sculptor and it was the thing the nobleman wanted that the sculptor produced.

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Despite the passing of centuries, mankind had merely been softened in some measure, but by no means humanized, in the feudal era of the Renaissance. The softening brought about a general substitution of canvas for marble. From some points of view there was progress, but more centuries were to come and go before the race could understand that there is in woman something better than graceful limbs, finely rounded thighs, lips that invite, flesh tints that attract and a bosom that appeals; something better in man than muscles and sinews which bespeak a liberal portion of animal strength and virility in all its forms.

No, I would not unsex Art. On the contrary, I would endow woman with the loftiest, the noblest attributes which it is possible for the mind to contemplate in relation to things that are finite. I would portray her exactly as she is—the mother

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of my race, the nourisher alike of body and mind and soul; I would exalt her as the source of all good things which have a place in the affairs of my kind. In men I would reveal hearts which are making the world a better and more cheerful place than it used to be, and brains which—literally—can remove mountains, which can divide continents and speak across the ocean—hearts and brains I would reveal instead of pitiful cords of sinuous flesh less powerful even, at best, than the goaded thighs of beasts of burden. But to do these things I would not chisel as did Praxiteles nor paint as did Correggio and Rubens (the arch-offender, probably,) and others of their kind.

You ask, by implication at least, what I would do with the masterpieces—beautiful, to be sure—which we have in the world. I confess very frankly that their destruction would leave a great void. I

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find myself in much the same position in which the young woman found herself after the evangelist had converted her—doubtless you recall the anecdote. She had a necklace. She prized it very highly. The exhorter persuaded her that it was an instrument of satan and that if she retained it she would be dragged down to hell.

She went home and gave it to her sister—kept it in the family, anyway.

I think I would give all that appears least desirable in Art to my brothers and sisters who protest that in it they can behold only the sublimely beautiful and that from it they can derive only the most inspiring thoughts and ideals. I believe I would ask them to keep the exalting masterpieces as much to themselves as possible.

And, happily, that is the very thing which is being done. Most of the so-called “soul-exalting” works of Art have been

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sequestered in galleries that are either private or inaccessible to the great proportion of the world's workers and producers—the folks that are really worth while.

And Commerce, the great civilizer, the promoter of peace and builder alike of nations and of character, is taking to the masses in this enlightened and progressive period a kind of Art which is robust and healthy, if it is not “expressive of the most transcendent artistic emotions.” Commerce is concerned with the physical and mental welfare of the people of the world, and, being so concerned, refuses to deliver to the multitude the productions of the modern sentimentalist. Can you conceive of such a thing as *The Ladies' Home Journal*, or *Collier's* or *Harper's* or *Everybody's* or *McClure's* or *Munsey*, or any of the other great publications reproducing on their covers or their frontispages such a thing, I will say, as “The

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Three Graces," by Rubens? Of course you cannot. But whenever a painter of pictures achieves something that is virile and vigorous and in truth and reality uplifting, then you will find excellent copies of it in thousands, quite likely in millions of homes—witness the painting I mentioned in my last letter, "The Breaking of Home Ties," or "The Angelus," or the mellowing and gentleizing productions of Jessie Wilcox Smith, a woman who, I sincerely believe, has, with her talent and her fine humanity, done more good in the world than Van Dyke or Gainsboro or any of the others like them wrought with their genius and their intellect.

I am interested in your quotation, particularly in the final clause—"beauty is one and the same, under whatever form it presents itself and ever excites the soul to religious emotions."

There is the extreme of sophistry; soph-



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istry the more malignant and baneful because, clothed in a form of language which enhances its seductiveness, the thought easily ingratiates itself and gets accepted almost without question. To me it has the ring of that literary casuistry which characterized the unhappy era of the French Revolution. I think I recognize the peculiar cadence.

Listen!

The pigeon beholds beauty in the serpent's eye, the moth in the flame. In each instance the beauty viewed is a lure to destruction.

Do you object to the illustrations? Do you prefer to confine the examination to persons and exclude such things as birds and insects? Very well! We need not go far for examples both tragic and full of pathos.

Every year thousands of excellent young women who might, but for the fatality,

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develop into excellent wives and mothers, are fascinated by the beauties of metropolitan life, the splendor of the "Great White Way." For many the end is the East River or Blackwell's Island. Each year, too, thousands of equally worthy young women contemplate the beauties of the footlights to the death, some of their womanhood, others of their bodies. How many a man has beheld, to his own ruin, the beauty in a woman's eyes? The lives of how many girls have been embittered by the beauty they discovered in a lover's face or form? There is almost ineffable beauty in a vision inspired by opium. There is beauty in the poppy field that lulls to sleep and death.

To all of this your answer, I fancy, is prompt.

In every instance, you tell me, I have cited false, not real beauty.

Excellent. But now, listen again. If

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*you* venture to assure the young women who hasten with palpitating hearts to Broadway, the aspirants who strive for a career behind the footlights, the man who is charmed by his sweetheart, the maiden fascinated by her lover, the opium dreamer or the beholder of a poppy field—if you assume to tell all of these persons that *they* are mistaken, deceived, hoodwinked; if you tell them that what they beheld was not beauty at all, but, rather, that their imaginations played them a trick—then, by your very act, you give me an equal right to insist with like vehemence that in “those perfect forms and features” *you* do not behold any real beauty. You give me an equal right to urge that you, too, have been tricked and duped; to protest that you have been fooled and misled by the very fabric of your fancies.

My friend, it is not true that “beauty is one and the same, under whatever form

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it presents itself and ever excites the soul to religious emotions."

Beauty, on the contrary, is likely to be a very dangerous thing; a thing to look upon almost always with suspicion; a thing to examine with much care and to judiciously analyze before accepting as in any manner or respect useful to us in working out the problems of our lives; problems which, to us, are very important matters.

And I believe that the beauty in many a marble, many a canvas is almost, if not quite, as perilous as the serpent's eye, the flame, the opium pellet or the blazing poppy field. I believe it is more dangerous than the other perils I have alluded to.

"But why, *why?*" is the insistent cry of the devotees of Art, "why is this beauty likely to be a thing of evil? Why should the view of symmetrical, idealized human forms stir other than intellectual or spiritual emotions?"

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The answer is exceedingly simple.

Practically all of our emotions and actions are prompted directly or indirectly by the association of ideas. In the ultimate analysis, absolute volition is probably quite as impossible for a finite being as is an understanding of limitless time or space. In turn our ideas are the result of our various experiences—in a few of the fundamental functions and conceptions partly the result of the experiences of our ancestors. The infant with virtually no ideas has had scarcely any experiences. Before men had crossed the seas they could entertain no idea of a trans-oceanic continent.

In brief, we are nothing more nor less than the sum-total of our experiences and such experiences of others as we have been able to incorporate. The latter are comparatively few, and, as a rule, abstract rather than tangible, or else relative to

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things outside of ourselves, like machinery and chemicals, instead of to emotions or impulses.

To illustrate: The small boy who beholds the picture of a cannon is very likely to think, without any effort or desire on his part, of a Fourth of July celebration, or, perchance, of the man in the circus who catches cannon balls. But the veteran who views the same picture is quite certain to think of Cold Harbor or The Wilderness or Appomattox, or some other battle. When you or I see an excellent photograph of a balloon rising from its anchorage our ideas are extremely vague, but when the aeronaut looks at the same illustration he is stirred by thoughts of swift flight through the air, enjoys again the thrill of gazing down upon the panorama of fields and streams and fugitive cities; even trembles, it may be, as he recalls perils from which he has narrowly

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escaped. When a man looks upon the painting of a fine and stately woman in a decorous and becoming gown, he thinks, quite likely, of the helpful and inspiring life of his mother. All of these impressions—those of the boy, the veteran, the aeronaut, the man—all are the result of experiences and the absolutely necessary, the inevitable and unescapable, the instantaneous association of ideas.

But let the same man pause, we will say, before any of the classics in question, ancient or mediæval, or some of the pieces of modern realism. Does he think of the gracious qualities which made his mother more to him than any other earthly being? Even the question, carefully put, is shocking. Even the query, delicately set down, goes a long way toward tearing the flimsy mantle of sophistry from the fetich which these "lovers of Art" have erected.

But, they urge, there are other worthy

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ideals than those inspired by maternal ancestors.

True, indeed. But this man who is standing before one of the "masterpieces"—what *are his* reflections, his emotions? That is the question.

We have, with abhorrence, eliminated one possibility.

Nor can the picture or statue, by any possible means, recall to his mind those beautiful days of childhood and youth when he sat in the charmed family circle and dreamed of worthy achievements in the big world, of coming greatness, perhaps. Nor can it bring back those early days at school when he learned to recite "Gray's Elegy" and "Lives of great men all remind us."

No, it must be something very different in character which will, by the association of ideas, bring back the hopes and revive the aspirations of those sweet times.



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It is absurd, in these days of enlightenment, of science and good sense, to say that even the canvas of a Raphael or an Angelo will do ever so little to give this man of ours any conception, actual or allegorical, of the hereafter, or set him to thinking of the rewards of the meek or the punishment of the proud.

Well, then, what will it do?

I will tell you. Despite any attempted exercise of the will, that man must recall, clearly or vaguely as the case may be, some event or events in his life associated with lines or forms or colors most nearly like the representation before him.

The veteran may not fight the whole battle over again to feel the thrill of war. The man may not live again all the felicitous incidents of some memorable occasion to experience in degree the gratifying agitations which then possessed him.

The veteran may not entertain a desire

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to rush again to battle, for he knows, too well, the suffering that is a part of warfare. But the aeronaut is likely to wish that again he might feel the thrill of aerial flight. More likely is the man to become imbued with a desire, either tranquil or ardent, according to circumstances and conditions, to experience again tumultuous sensations similar to those which have been revived in the slumber chambers of his brain by recollections brought into being by the association of ideas.

"But," say the advocates of your classicism, the defenders of your modern realism, "there are, thank heaven, some men and women unlike this person with his evil recollections so easily raked out from their dormitory."

I did not say this man's recollections are evil. They may be of felicities, sanctioned by the church, that were preludes to fatherhood.

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Without quibbling, however, I will admit that there are women and even men who have had no "experiences." But—heed this—those same men and women have inherited the experiences of countless generations of forbears. Their recollections, their association of ideas are doubtless vague and visionary instead of clearly defined, but their imaginings are more alluring than the memory promptings of one who has had some of his illusions dispelled. This is particularly true of all young folks whose inexperience is due to immaturity rather than to any rigidly righteous or ascetic bent of mind.

*It does not lie within any man to tell HOW the malevolent influences are most likely to become manifest. The possibilities are as varied as all the emotions and associations and environments of all individuals are numerous; which is equivalent to saying that they are incomprehen-*

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*sible in number. In the same manner, they are limitless in degree; varying from the imperceptible impulse which they may exert in one instance, to the squandering of fortune, dishonor or even death which they may speedily bring about in another.*

And now, though it is late at night and I am worn in both mind and body, I am going to try, before I throw myself down for a few hours of rest to prepare for another day of lively activity; I am going to try to answer your question—"What conception is possible, in these sordid days, comparable with the inspiring portrayal of the very life of a virile people, a people destined to rule the world and extend an animating influence down through all the centuries?"

In the first place, these are not sordid days. You have been unhappily influenced by that numerous breed of congenitally malformed persons whose heads

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are twisted about on their shoulders and who must, of very necessity it seems, look backwards. They are a pitiable lot of mental cripples. They breed decadence and it is necessary for progress to make its way over the obstacles they take delight in erecting. It would be an unmitigated blessing if a pestilence were to destroy them. I beg of you to speedily free yourself from every vestige of their evil influence.

In all the history of our planet, from Chaos to this midnight hour, there has never been an era, long or short in duration, when mankind was the recipient of so many benefactions, such diverse and bountiful blessings as at the present time.

Don't you know that the human race was hungry, *hungry*, HUNGRY until three-quarters of a century ago? Don't you know that the stomachs of the world were never filled until, in this wonderful coun-

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try of yours and mine, the reaper and the threshing machine were sent into the fields? I'm not talking about kings and princes, exceptionally fortunate men and robbers—I'm talking about the nameless billions of people who lived and craved for food and died before this wonderful era when the fruitful soil and the brain of a regenerated race united in yielding and reaping and grinding enough wheat to dispel from the face of the earth the most awful agony that ever gnaws at the vitals of animate creatures—the agony of hunger.

Ah, no, these are not sordid days.

But the frieze—you ask if there can be any conception comparable with that allegorical representation of life in the days when Greece was young. Listen! Instead of your youthful warriors, your sage elders, your powerful steeds, your animals decked for sacrifice, your bondsmen, your

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chariots, your maidens with offerings to their prototype, a virgin goddess; instead of these—

I see millions of homes nestled among the trees in rural communities, surrounded by green lawns in villages, and set, economically, side by side in the endless streets of great cities. In these homes I see carpets on the floors, pictures on the walls, books on the long rows of shelves, comfortable furniture in every room, food in the pantrys, fuel in the cellars. In these homes I see happy children and calm faced, earnest, devoted fathers and mothers assembling, when the lamps are lighted, around the center table in the living room or the glowing grate in the library. I see love and honor and courage and self-esteem and high regard for others reflected in the faces of old and young.

I see small school houses in every town-

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ship of a broad land, larger ones in the towns, larger still in the wards of cities, and academies or colleges in almost every large industrial center. I see countless youthful feet hurrying each morning down country lanes, along the board walks of villages and over the stone pavements of the great municipalities. I see eager faces turned questioningly and anxiously toward the young women—bless them—and the men whose mission in this world is to illuminate with knowledge the minds of youth.

I see church spires rising wherever a few people have gathered together. I see hosts of men and women and children kneeling in reverence before altars unstained by the blood of sacrifice; altars dedicated in the name of a religion, not, perhaps, without faults and errors, but which teaches as best it can the noblest purposes of life—love and service and purity.



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I see hospitals everywhere with doors flung wide for the sick and injured; with white beds awaiting the sufferer, be he rich or poor, old or young, white or black, red or yellow; with medicines of every kind as free-will offerings to whomsoever may need and ask; with the cunning hands of skillful surgeons ready always to sever from its lodgment every ill of the flesh which threatens the end of life or the impairment of health. I see a mighty band of brave women by day and by night holding the soothing glass to parched lips; pressing soft, cool hands on fevered, burning brows—a band of women sometimes called angels by those who have suffered.

I see humane societies in every community, organizations of big hearted men and women who cannot and will not stand idly by and behold any living creature suffer because of the avarice or caprice or passion of a master or an owner; organi-

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zations which have bettered the minds of men by requiring them to regard the feeling of animals.

Enlisted under the banner of Commerce, I see a mighty army subduing the world by brilliant strategies and dazzling manœuvres which signify peace and plenty, happiness and prosperity for both conqueror and conquered.

I see countless fires brightly burning beneath the boilers in mill and factory. I hear the hum of spindles and the click of looms which tell me that none in the land need fear the frost which not so long ago came down from the North each year to sluff out the lives of thousands. I see furnace stacks aflame by day and by night and behold in the pits where white iron flows as water, a multitude of men, each mightier in fact than Hercules in fancy, who spend their lives moulding monster bridges, towering buildings and all the im-

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plements which the race knows so well how to employ in this new age of iron.

I see the prows of steel ships dividing the ocean that your valiant Greeks and your brave Romans, those races of "pristine virtue and genius," dare not, could not combat in the smallest measure; I see men who have eaten their Christmas dinner in this land of yours and mine, clink glasses with our British brothers when the New Year dawns. I behold endless miles of better highways than the Cæsars, with all their talents for road-building, ever dreamed of; highways that are as free from raids of the bandit as the Seven Seas are free from pirate craft.

I see battle flags furled for decades at a stretch instead of waving perennially over armies whose only call to battle is the desire to slay and loot and devastate. I see the representatives of every nation assembling season after season for the

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

purpose of perpetuating a peace that becomes more enduring as men grow wiser and the world better at heart. I see, when there does occur an appeal to arms, combatants who are more humane, more merciful in their ministrations to wounded foemen and prisoners of war than the followers of Antony or Augustus or even the illustrious and virtuous Charlemagne were to their own companions in distress. I see women with great souls and valiant hearts kneeling within the firing lines to soften the agony and save the lives of the fallen. I see vanquished generals kindly greeted, sincerely honored and generously entertained by their victors instead of tortured by flame or chained to the chariots conquerors.

I see the endless achievements of science, "miracles wrought by mind." I behold forces of earth and air, unharnessed when the Parthenon stones were hewn,

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tirelessly toiling to lighten or to bear the burdens men once had to carry unaided. I see the terrors of plagues that for numberless centuries scourged the earth, dissipated now by enlightenment. In the domed observatories I see men determining the weight of the sun and in the pastures of Ohio and Montana I see others lengthening the wool on the backs of feeding sheep. In the laboratories of our colleges and universities I see scholars passing sentences of death upon one disease germ after another and on the broad grazing grounds of the West I see students shortening the legs and thickening the surloins of yearlings that are still on the hoof. I behold incredible speed bred into the sinews of horses, new colors added to the petals of flowers and more delectable flavors grafted into the fruits of garden and orchard.

These, my dear Mrs. Phelps, are a few

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of the things I am able to view in this amazing century of yours and mine; a few, a very few of the things which a sculptor of the new era might employ for portrayal in the frieze of a new, a better Parthenon.

And, thank God, 'twas for such conceptions that St. Gaudens strove, that Edwin Abbey strives to-day.

Good night—good morning, rather.

As ever, yours,

B. MM.

*From Her*

**M**Y DEAR MR. MACMAHON:—I am oppressed by this revelation of strength, this deluge of vitality. I feel like one who has been grasped by a powerful hand and crushed back against the wall; overcome, but not, of necessity, convinced. To-night I cannot, by any exercise of mind or will, write in reply to the thoughts—large, awe inspiring thoughts—which you, by the exercise of your masterly impulsiveness, flood my mind with. Let me think it all over for a few days, let me catch my breath and get a fresh grip on my ideas. Let me go back for a while to the commonplace (which you preach) and



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live in the little things of every day. Then I will write to you again, perhaps, about these big things in Art—big and important to me, at any rate. I will try to tell you why the pictures and statues which have lived, some for hundreds and others for thousands of years, exalt and ennoble.

To-night I find for about the first time in my life that my doll is filled with sawdust. I want to talk for a few minutes with some one who will listen and who will speak back to me through the distance with the whimsical lightness of touch which you reveal in your less turbulent moods.

If this letter is incoherently put together, you must know that it is because a house party has just broken up this afternoon and everybody and everything is at sixes and sevens. Almost every hour of the four days of entertaining I have received messages by post or wire or 'phone

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from Mr. Boynton urging haste in some of the work he is waiting for. Everything was made more exhilarating by the fact that all of my guests, save two, belong to the ardent and excitable Latin peoples. The *two* were Germans. Only one other circumstance could make the situation more charmingly exciting, and the circumstance was not lacking—in one way or another, directly or indirectly, every member of the party was attached to the diplomatic service.

To-morrow I am going away from the city for a few days—down to my old home in Virginia, where, early as it is, the birds are singing and the flowers abloom. Ah, I shall revel and luxuriate and be a girl again. All the things which vex one's mind and soul here where the representatives and legates of every state and nation play the big, difficult, endless game of take and give, but always take if you can;

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all such things I am going to forget as I roam, light-hearted, over the fields and through the woods, just as in my happy, merry childhood days.

Tell me, do you not, too, rejoice when you behold the fields and flowers; when kindly, loving Mother Nature enfolds you and lulls you with the infinite variety of her revelations?

And perhaps I shall take a book with me—something from one or another of my favorites, something light and buoyant, like the spring, a tale that will do nothing more than serve to bring out in finer relief the glories that are in hill and dale, in forest and growing fields of grain. You who are so wise, have you read all things?

And to make my little journey more memorable, perhaps you will send to me, while I am down at the old home, a letter; perhaps you will tell me something, only a little maybe, of yourself. Surely it is not

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woman's curiosity alone which prompts a desire to know something of the *man* who stands back of the *mind*. Surely it is pardonable—if, indeed, there is any occasion for pardon—to wish for a better understanding of the ego which rules an intellect that, though unseen, suddenly becomes an influential factor in one's,—I was going to say life; I will change it to ambition.

Ever faithfully yours,

E. V. P.

*From Him*

**M**Y DEAR MRS. PHELPS:—Your note came to me yesterday. In the evening and this morning and this afternoon one or another of my friends said to me, "Why, Mac, you're looking more cheery than you've looked for a long time."

And so I need not tell you that it does me good to receive one of your letters. You must write often to me.

And to-day you are down where the sun is shining and the birds singing.

Yes, I should like to be in the fields. I should like to roam through the woods, too. But chiefly because you are there; chiefly because I could find the finest

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quality of pleasure in association with a mind which in many ways I have perceived is akin to mine.

But let me tell you something. Through the window of a city house I can look at the bare brick wall a few feet away and keenly enjoy every hour that I am able to filch from the hustle and bustle of a work-a-day life. Always I have kept on speaking terms with myself; always, in fact, maintained cordial and friendly relations. And so, when the wall is before me and no real fields or flowers or woods or attractive landscapes to intrude themselves and insist upon recognition, I can have just the kind of hillside I want; just the kind of forest or brook or sea, and in them or on them I can put the flowers or the folks or the craft I fancy. I become a magician, all powerful, and can at will change sunlight to moonlight or mid-day to midnight. I can have my fields—for

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they are mine, all mine; even the ocean waves are mine when I want them—I can have my fields present the verdure of spring or the gold of summertime; I can people my meadows with Cleopatras or Iolas; across my prairies I can have regiments of Sheridans and Custers and Codys charging or battling in whatsoever daring way pleases me best. On my lawns I can have joyful children playing all the fascinating games they love so dearly, each supremely happy, on every lip a smile and on every tongue a song or cheery word.

Yes, I like brick walls.

You ask me in your gracious way—I should, I think, be tempted to say “flattering way” if it were any other woman—if I have read many books. I have read enough to learn that it is an excellent thing for one to think for oneself; enough, too, to learn that I can discover something of good in everything, even the worst of



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books, and that it is scarcely possible to read the best of writings without coming upon something that, if not actively mischievous, is at least false or discordant in some degree.

I care more for Hamlin Garland than for Guy de Maupassant. I like James Whitcomb Riley better than Robert Browning. I like Mr. Dooley better than Mr. James. I believe that Miss Alcott and Margaret Sidney have done more to mellow hearts and brighten the lives of both old and young than all the Balzacs and Zolas who ever delved into muck and mire. I like Burns, the peasant, better than Byron, the lord. I can get more useful and helpful ideas from Kipling than from Milton. I believe that William Shakespeare has done more to humanize mankind than any person who has ever written, save only Saul of Tarsus. I like Herbert Spencer better than the prayer books.

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I like the Sermon on the Mount better than any of the creeds I've ever examined. I think I have read Alice in Wonderland more times than any book of fiction I know of, and Aesop's Fables more times than any volume that has to do with philosophy, morals, ethics or good sense.

Of late I have been looking over some of Mr. Kipling's things again. Last night I re-read his "Brushwood Boy." It is a very wonderful story. Often I've thought of it since your pictures and your first letter brought you into my life. Kipling is very keen at analyzing things just as they are, and he has forcefully reminded us that we have dreams—all of us. We knew that we had them, but it took his touch to make us know that we knew. It's too bad that the dreamers of the same dreams don't always meet. It's too bad. Yes, I'm fond of Kipling. He has written philosophy into his fiction, more par-

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ticularly into his verse; a philosophy that, for every day use, rings clear and true and strikes close to the white man's heart. I know you women care little for the things he has done. But you will veer about one of these days. Just now you fancy he has undertaken to amputate some of your frailties without the courtesy to first administer an anæsthetic, and you can't forgive.

I never cared much for the morbid creatures of literature. I like the healthy ones. I like the men—and women, too—who are robust, who have strong, regular heart beats and more or less fire in their brains. What is the use of hasheesh or absynthe when one can get good bread and beef-steak, spring water and Mocha and Java?

It pays to be healthy.

And yet all of us have our faults—those of us who eat thick steaks quite as well as the others. It may be that my

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faults are more grievous than those of a Villon or a Poe. But I prefer my kind of faults—as the Pharisee his virtues, I suppose.

And now, when will you return to the city? I am coming to see you. A great desire to look into your eyes has taken possession of me.

*From Her*

**M**Y DEAR MR. MACMAHON:—Has it occurred to you that there is every probability of your spoiling a hopeful painter of pictures—or shall I say, semi-hopeful?—with the result of having on your hands a personal attache in the way of a letter writer? This minute I should be at work with my brush. This minute, also, I should be at luncheon with a party of gentlemen and ladies whose influence, if enlisted, might be of much value to manufacturing interests in the South—the land I devotedly love and ardently wish to serve. Instead, I am sitting here, all alone in the house, writing

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to you. It will not do at all. We must have a reform administration.

Last night I got back to the city, and, very late, sat up in bed, school girl fashion, and with pencil in lieu of pen wrote a lot of nonsense which of course you will never see—excepting the first two pages that contain a few of the ideas I am striving to clarify and set down on paper in reply to your crushing onslaught of a few days ago. To-day, when the sun is shining and the vision clear, I shall try to write a very sensible letter, one in nowise marked by any flagrant form of dementia—

Do you know there is something about your letters (perhaps it is the atmosphere of them, possibly the unrestrained frankness which frequently almost stuns me) that is conducive to—to—what shall I say?—less reserve, I will put it, than one should observe in writing, as I am doing, to a stranger? And yet—somehow it is ex-

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tremely difficult for me to bear always in mind the fact that you *are* a stranger to me. Sometimes I—but there, I am drifting again with the same current that carried me along so easily, so swiftly last night. I must catch up the oars:

I enjoyed what you had to say about Mr. Kipling. I like his things quite as well as you possibly can, but I know well enough that others of my sex rebel. They say he is brutal, even coarse. But sometimes I've thought it's because he knows them so well and tells what he knows, that they wince. When he said that

“Judy O’Grady and the Colonel’s lady  
Are sisters under their skins,”

(or was it the Captain’s lady?) we all knew it was every word true, but some of us didn’t like it spoken out loud. Somehow I don’t mind—I even admire him for his sincerity and boldness; for, if you’ll



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be really, truly honest, you will admit it takes a brave man to incur the wrath of all the sex. I can even forbear with his Vampire, although I never knew a woman outside of a book who was a vampire. My life has always, even in these later years, been so guarded and the path drawn so aside that, as far as I know, I never even saw one across the street. But, for that matter, I never saw a man who revealed outwardly any indication of badness, though I've met several here in the capital, who, folks told me, were black sheep. They looked white enough to me; at any rate, flesh-colored. Indeed, I have a pretty good opinion of men both in general and in particular—of their character and honest motives, I mean. They have been nice and good to me. But, oh dear, aren't they tiresome in the main! That's where you have your innings, my friend. If you hadn't been different, ah, so different! do

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

you suppose I'd have been sitting up o' nights to write to you?

"The Brushwood Boy"—the dream. Sometimes it seems to me that I have known you very long, very closely—but if we are to have the highest degree of pleasure, reap the largest benefits from this strange, and, as it is apparently becoming, incongruous correspondence, it must be with no pretenses or false ideas between us. You must not come to see me. You said "I am." In my life no other man has said that to me before. Always they have said "may I?" You may not come. If you were not you, I should try to put it in some other way. But you know, you understand. . . . All we shall ever get, all we *can* ever get out of this intellectual friendship, if such it may continue to be, is the intimate knowledge we shall gain through our letters of each other's ideas and ideals. If circumstances had been, if they *were* different—but they are not.

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

Your wholesomeness, your lack of cynicism—so common with men of brains,—your honesty with all the essentials acts like a tonic to me; invigorates, inspires.

Write to me. But do not come to see me.

Faithfully and cordially,

E. V. P.

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*From Him*

**I LIKE YOU.**

When you were a girl you were fond of playing 'round bonfires, weren't you? And dared get your skirts very near them, didn't you?

I want to say something to you. In a multitude of ways you are a brilliant woman. In some things you are a child—a girl of sixteen. I like brilliant women and I am fond of children. I get on well with either. You and I have, therefore, a double bond of sympathy.

Why do you say, and repeat it, that we shall not see each other? Do you rebel at the idea of having any delusion, what-

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

ever its character, shattered? If that is it, let me tell you that my warmest friends are those whose hands have oftenest struck mine.

To me it seems, also, that I have known *you* very long, very closely. In the first brief message that came to me from your hand there seemed to be a cordial, a friendly contact of congenial, sympathetic minds which I have never experienced in reading letters sent to me even by old and cherished friends.

And then, when I held in my fingers the penciled pages which you enclosed—pages freighted with agitating odors of the boudoir that carried with them ideas and associations far removed from placid contemplation of things intellectual—then there came to me a thrill of emotion which taught me that my fancies are not delusions; not tricks of imagination.

It is in vain that you tell me I am not to

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

see you. This world of ours is not so large a place that you and I can live in it a great while longer without looking into each other's eyes.

I am reading again your last charming, delightful letter, and I see the word "cynical,"—"so common with men of brains," you write. Do you not know that the cynic and the failure are identical? Have you not learned that the man who has made even a partial success of it is never cynical? Only the man who has made a mess of it turns up his lip at the thing he can never possess—it matters not whether the thing is gold, political power, knowledge, love, peace of mind. I am sorry always for the cynic. I thank you for writing that in me you behold nothing cynical. Whatever my faults may be, God grant that I shall never become a misanthrope.

Listen, my brilliant woman and charming little girl, it is after two o'clock and I

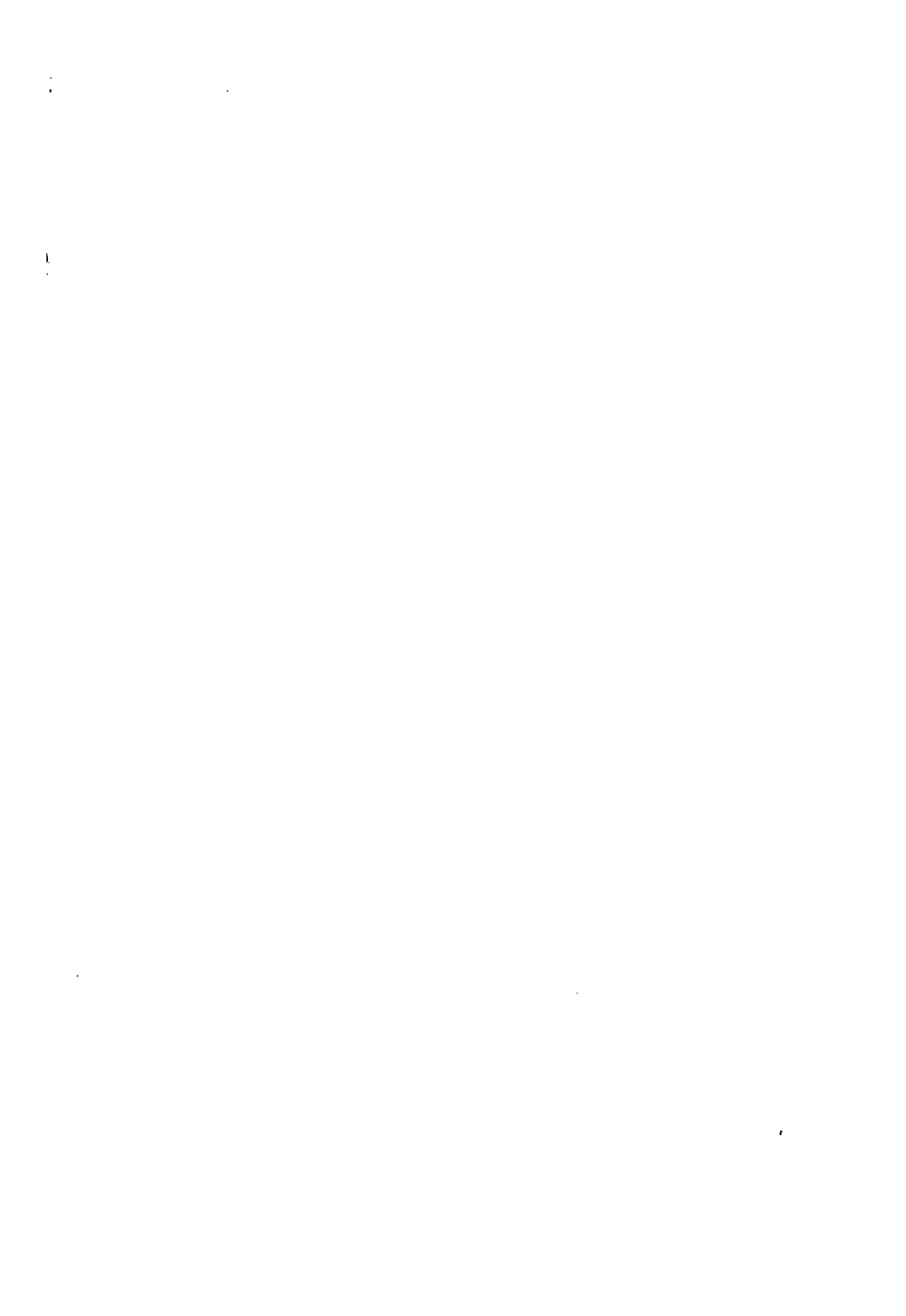


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am so worn out that I cannot write more than this brief note to-night, though there are many things I want to say to you. And so I shall send this along and—wait for the letter you are going to write immediately after receiving it.

If my letters affect you like a tonic, yours are wine and ozone for me. They exhilarate and delight me.

If what I have tried to write drags and seems heavy and dull, please be charitable and ascribe it to the fact that, although exhausted—physically at least—after eighteen hours of labor, I could not content myself to rest before sending a message to you. Good night.



*From Her*

**W**HAT have you done to me? I knew that letter was coming to-night, coming to me. I was so impatient. You must be warned—I shall want your letters very much and you will have to write them—late at night, if need be, when all the springs of life seem run down. But why warn you? It is not going to harm you, and—I have never been burned at any bonfire in my life. Perhaps I used to dance pretty close, I don't quite remember, but I am persuaded that I shall now. Ah, it is so exhilarating, so fascinating, I could not help it to-night if I would. And to-morrow 'twill be as it is to-night—the most

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interesting thing in the world, this dance in the changeful light that suddenly flashes across my path—I was going to say sombre path, but it has been so only in comparison.

I *am* the girl of sixteen. You are uncanny in your insight. Always in my heart, in the woman's heart, lives the girl; and often, I think, the child keeps house, for a little while at a time, in the woman's eyes.

Your brick wall vision—that is why your letters, why *you* delight me, my friend. It is your imagination that stimulates and invigorates me. That is it. Where you are, there you can dream dreams that are more real than the phantoms which people the daily lives of other men. Yes, that is what appeals to me in you, the dreamer whose visions sweeten toil.

If this is the last word you ever re-

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

ceive from my hand (which I fondly hope it will not be) let me thank you for the joy you—with your imagination and your ideals and your wholesomeness—have brought into my life. I am not analyzing it. I cannot hope even that it will last. But I shall hold it very close—very, well tenderly, while it remains with me. I have been a very happy woman and it has been because I have known how instinctively to grasp joy before it fled. You came to me when, for the first time, I found life wasn't as good fun as I had always thought it.

*Am* I unreasonable and impulsive? *Am* I heedless of the flames that gleam and curl and beckon alluringly, and—burn? All day since your letter came I have been consumed with a desire (yes, I am going to confess it) to go to the 'phone and call you, a desire to hear your voice even though it were so many miles away.

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

No, we shall never meet. You cannot come here. I forbid it, forbid, forbid! We are going to be very good friends for a long time, I hope—but just as we are; I want to keep you just as you are.

*Later,*

How strange, how amazing it is, this relation into which we have entered! Scarcely had I written that I longed to hear your voice when you called me—was it some mysterious message of appeal that flashed from my mind across the distance to yours? What was it, tell me, that prompted you to minister to my desire even as the desire was taking form and shape?

Your words are still sounding in my ears. What manner of man are you that by the masterfulness of your personality, the inflection of your voice you can draw one toward you in this way?

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

I fear that all along I have shown too little reserve of my inmost thoughts. But you have invited them so seductively, by some attribute of your being more than by your words alone, that I have responded, and do respond even now, without power, scarcely without the desire to resist.

Do you know that I have always liked my own mind? I have nice thoughts, pure and clean and good; not holy, perhaps, but, at any rate, seemly and blameless thoughts such as I can sit down with and enjoy. From the days of my evenly regulated childhood through these last few years of great activity here in the capital, there has been no room, no time, no desire for aught else. I have had no secrets in my life, no fears. So you see when I have talked to you like a child in these letters, even over the long miles of wire, it is because, back of it all the old habits, the old conventionalities



## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

hold fast—the “thinketh no evil.”

I have hardly thought of you as close enough to touch hands until to-night, when you were speaking. Then with an open heart I would have reached forth my fingers and laid them within yours.

But I believe you are enough of a dreamer to find a fullness of joy in this relation which we have entered upon, and to think no more of changing, in any way, our intellectual association. A lesser man, I know, could not appreciate it. I am not a very selfish woman and did I not believe that I am capable of giving a fair return for what you give me I should not encourage a continuance of the correspondence.

If we could meet frequently, just as I meet other men here at home, I feel a consciousness that life might mean something different and better to both of us. Each, I know, would be to the other very un-

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

monotonous. But as that cannot be; as you have your life to live, and I mine, far apart from each other, and as our lines have converged for only a few weeks, or, if very fortunate, months, I would "grasp the skirts of happy chance" and live the hours as if they were all that are to be mine.

"Why to-morrow I may be  
Myself with Yesterday's seven  
Thousand years."

This is an interminable letter, but short as seemed our talk over the 'phone, it afforded the theme for much to be put down on paper. How I like your uncompromising wholesomeness of character, your frankness that sometimes becomes almost brutal. How dare you say such things? Sometimes I think you are very young and verdant—in your salad days. And then again I am sure you must be a valetudinar-

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

ian. You see, after all, I know so very little about you. I have been trying to refrain from asking you for a photograph, but I guess—there, you would think me New Englandese instead of a Virginian, bred to “reckon”—I guess you will have to send one along. I don't care to continue without knowing how my Art critic appears—ah, how far from Art have we drifted in these few short days.

Strive as I may, I cannot gain an understanding of the inexplicable influence which prompts me—against my will frequently, always against my better judgment—to send, again and again, to you words which are more—not cordial or friendly, exactly, but more intimately personal than in my life I have written to any man, even those bound to me by closest ties of kinship.

Once more it is long past the midnight hour. Good night, my friend of to-day.



*From Him*

**I** SCARCELY know whether to write to-night to the woman or the girl. I have just read a long delightful, girlish letter from the child, but the woman has gotten into my dreams and I think of her sometimes—often—when I shouldn't. I will write to the woman.

And at the very start I see I have used a word of doubtful value—"shouldn't."

Despite all you have said about my "wholesomeness," I am in no respect different from other and wiser and better men who never refrain from doing the thing which, theoretically, they shouldn't do, if, by doing it, they can derive the

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

greatest gratification. That which ministers most unto my happiness; that, by the primal law of Nature, must be mine to have and to hold if by any endeavor I can come into possession of it.

My absorbing desire now is to see you. I am going to take your hand in mine. Believe me, my dear, brilliant woman, it is childish for the pleasant little girl to write that I am not. But it is infinitely womanly, it is the sublimity of art, unconscious, intuitive art which prompts the woman-child to stir a man's blood by conveying to him the subtle knowledge that the words he is reading were penned by a hand and arm not harnessed by the tailor or the dressmaker. Ah, woman! woman! sometimes I am persuaded that the keen sighted Shaw is altogether right when he urges that you are ever the pursuer and never the pursued; that always you are the huntress, even when you fancy you are being hunted down.

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

Yes, I am dreamer enough to rejoice in this delightful correspondence between you and me—but I am of the earth. In mind and body there is not an element of the unnatural Dante about me. It would satisfy me as little to dream—and only to dream—of my Beatrice as it would have satisfied Bobbie Burns to dream—and only to dream—of his Mary.

“If we could meet frequently—I feel a consciousness that life might mean something different and better to both of us.”

You wrote that.

Listen, I want to tell you something.

If you and I—you and I—were where we met often, beautifully, ideally often, do you know what we would talk about? We would talk frequently of suicide.

Sometimes we would say to each other, “we shall not meet again.” We would say “now we will bid farewell.” We would draw a step nearer together to reveal to



## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

ourselves and to each other that we were very frank and that we were really going to say good-bye. We would reach out our hands for the final leave-taking. Our palms would touch and—and—some other time we would say “now we are going to part.” On other occasions we would quarrel—you and I—frightfully, desperately, in violation of all the rules and precepts of good breeding which we know so well and which we would utterly, maliciously, vindictively ignore. And then, after a while, we would go, arm in arm, to some little lunch table, smiling, infinitely more than happy, and we would look long into each other's eyes—you and I.

So, you see, it is fortunate for you that you are not to see me often; for, to live in truth and reality as you would of very necessity live if we were a great deal together would be so far, so very far from the conventions and amenities to which

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

always you have been accustomed that you would sometimes find it—almost unpleasant. But listen again—that woman has never known the sublimity of happiness, the culmination of Earth's rejoicing who has not met the man in whom she awakens the violence of the king of all creatures, and, herself in exquisite terror, subdues the king she has created.

Remember, I am writing to the woman to-night.

I would send you a photograph if there were a picture of me in the world. There being none, I will have one taken soon. But my pen is competent to create for you a picture which, in some ways, may be more faithful than the camera would yield.

My features were not necessarily designed for each other. There are instances of carelessness on the part of Nature. My lips would do very well in a harmonious setting. Sometimes I fancy that my nose

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

slipped in the potter's hand. It suggests neither strength nor weakness, but, to the student of physiognomy, indicates a nature given more to contemplation than to initiative action. My forehead is not sufficiently regular or conformable in line to be altogether desirable. It, too, reveals the contemplative rather than the initiative mind—in fact, a glance is sufficient to indicate to one that I could never be an empire builder. I have no quarrel with my eyes. Naturally, they are dark. It is the man that acts, not the man that thinks, who has eyes of blue or gray. Since early boyhood I have been very strong. Each of my seven years in the colleges I was first in every competitive event that I entered either on the field or on the water, and I entered many. You can easily perceive that I am a bit proud of my prowess as an athlete—a pardonable pride, however, in these days of anæmics.

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

But to return to my face. So far as I know, it has never won or lost a friend for me. And the man who complains about coming out even when the odds are such long ones is not a good sportsman—you see how easy it is for me to lapse into the vocabulary of the campus and the athletic field. Sometimes my appearance is boyish, sometimes it suggests a man approaching middle life but not quite sure he is on the right road.

“....—ah, how far from art have we drifted in these few short days,” you write to me.

I'm not so sure of that. I view our destiny in a larger way; by your side I take my place in the larger scheme of things. Back of the petty art concerning which men quibble, Nature stands, and back of that the Master Artist. And He, I believe, has chosen us—you and me—for His own; chosen our lives, it may be, for color

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

touches upon some canvas that His hand alone can vivify. Surely these profound emotions which so strangely stir us are not of our creation. They are not born of our initiative, nor engendered within our will. No, no, we have not drifted far from art. Instead, we are being incorporated, despite volition, in some strange, sublime creation that is Art itself, and

“Only the Master shall praise, and only the Master shall blame.”

And now I have answered your letter—now only another word. I am thinking of the moment when your voice, the music of your lips, came borne to me across the leagues that divide us. My heart beats faster as I think of that moment, and the veins in my forehead are swollen as I lean over the pen which is so slow to record the words that precipitate themselves

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

from my agitated mind. You have a way, a woman's intuitive way, of setting the pulses throbbing. When you told me you were at the wire in your loose, clinging robe—of course you didn't say loose or clinging—there was a thrill which must have been conveyed across the distance, over the hills and rivers and streams to your heart and brain and nerves. Ah, if I could have reached out through the black miles which intervened between us! If I could, you would have rejoiced that we are in the world together—you and I.

*From Her*

IS it the call of the Eternal Springtime in the blood, or is it YOU calling to me this night with a new note that my heart has never heard before? I am afraid—afraid; I, who never before knew fear, who have been so sure of myself, so remote, so scornful.

It is not the child who tells you again that the distance must forever remain between us as it stretches now. It is the woman—never a *brilliant* woman, just a mere woman—who is scared to-night for the first time in her life. She thought it all a—well, little more than a pleasant, rather fascinating sort of mental fencing,



## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

of idea-thrusting-and-parrying, until, just the other day, a star or something burst in her brain and she had a luminous second of consciousness. Is it the Spring-time, you Man, who ought to know?

There are so many elements in this new and wonderful fear. Most of all, perhaps, she is afraid of losing you—you, whom she has known but a day, yet such a day. As it appears now, she stands an excellent chance of losing you no matter which alternative she chooses. You are going to be impatient and fling yourself out of the situation if she is obstinate—you men always call a woman's firmness obstinacy—and if she is weak the incident will soon lose its zest for you. And for her—ah, well!—Woman the huntress does not appeal to me as being logical. Man likes the chase, she loves the surrender—*when she may!*

How marvelous is every incident, great

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

and trivial, in this strange relation of ours?—yours and mine, as you would say; and I like it as you would say it. The picture you drew for me, the picture of yourself, did nothing more than sharpen some of the lines ever so little. Even from the beginning I have known you as you are—and as you should be.

But now let me send you a picture of the woman and—the child.

She was a lonely little thing, that child. I am sorry for her now, looking back over the years. She has always been lonely, most so now, when in that wild moment of illumination she sees what companionship might be.

Her babyhood was surrounded by romance and mystery which have only lately cleared. She was the only child in the big house. The animals, the birds, even the wild creatures of the woods were her playmates. She did not go to school

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

early, for the plantation was far removed and her parents had exclusive notions. So there was the governess and afterwards the tutor, a lady of many tongues—hence her predilection for the languages of many peoples. Then there was the boarding school, and, finally, college. But always she was a lonely little girl, although a happy, sunshiny one. She had learned the charm of solitude, the possibility of resources in her own mind. And she was always a student, even while being overfull of activity and life. Child and woman, she has always had a marvelous degree of vitality, of energy, of endurance. She has never had a headache, scarcely a pain—perhaps all this does not interest you? Ah, it does, it must.

Then, very young, she married—a man almost a third of a century older. She wasn't anxious to marry. She put off the day as long as possible, but it seemed the

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

way of the world, this marrying and giving in marriage. Ah, the *giving*! That was the trouble. She had so much to give, so very much, and it has not—been—given.

She has been a happy woman. She has had a safe and guarded life; the kind of life that is best for woman. She has had kindness and gentleness and—calm coolness always, and she has liked that way. It seemed more to her mind. She has never thought that she wanted it different. She has tried very hard to be like other women, good, patient, commonplace creatures—but there has always been something wanting, something lacking. At her breast no little child has ever lain and she has never got over envying those other good, patient, commonplace women. It was a very cruel thing, this lack in her life. It has dwarfed and narrowed her soul. She would have been a different woman to-day—she would not even have

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

had time for *you*—wonderful as you are in your inexplicable influence from afar—had there been a little child. She never sees any baby, grubby, ugly or unlovely that she does not want it for her own.

Now aren't you a bit disillusioned—you impetuous, masterful man—now that you see revealed just the repetition of the eternal-feminine, the female creature with her devouring maternal instinct?

So there you are—Ah, there *you* are! What a difference you make in the world—her world—already. Can't you see that she is afraid of you because for the first time she recognizes—ah, well! she has not been living on a desert island and there are always men and men, but they cannot write letters that are for all the world like the club with which the cave-dweller knocked over the woman of his choice before he threw her across his shoulder and carried her home to his cave.

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

Then—how complex is this amazing mind of ours?—she is afraid of something else. She looked in the glass to-day when her every nerve was a-thrill with the reading of your letter. There was a gray hair above her temple. And yet, and yet, the eyes were those of the girl and the cheeks, pale so long, were flushed—what have you done, you cave-dweller?

And this woman, afrighted to-day by a single hair over her temple, has always rather rejoiced in her coldness, her uplifted sort of conceit that she was remote from the drawing of physical charm because she could keep aloof and hold men there, unconsciously, without effort. Suddenly she would have a fairy god-mother make a second visit and bestow the something which would bring one man a-near; one man whom she fears and cannot, will not, dare not have a-near.

Good night, dear you—how near you are.

*From Him*



**I** KNEW that your supreme, your perfect letter would come to me, for I knew that we—you and I—have been caught up by some Inexorable Force and tossed together; knew that to battle against the Omnipotent is folly. I knew that some day you would say to me “I recognize the Absolute,” and that in reply I would say “and I have recognized it for days, for years, for æons.”

We go through the world touching elbows with tens of thousands of men and women, recognizing them not, heeding them not; and then, in the throng, there is an electrical spark and the world



## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

changes and life is an exquisite thrill instead of a monotone. Why? No one has ever answered. None ever shall. Always it will be as impossible for me to tell why I tremble when I think of you, as it will be for me to explain why I am I, and not an essence without a personality.

Let it be the cave-dweller and the woman he has slung across his shoulder, if you will. I like it. I like the thrill that comes with the thought of mastery and possession and contact on the rug that was torn from the lion's whelp. I like the primordial; the feel of caresses which would be brutal if they were not prompted by the Law that replenishes the earth.

I like you and your mind that is akin to mine though it has been harnessed all your life—harnessed in vain. For me, I never let them put a bit in my mouth nor cinch a saddle on my back. And you—when you hear the call of the wild, how

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

the notes, new to your rounded ear, but familiar, ah, so caressingly familiar to your heart of hearts; how they thrill every pulse and set every nerve a-tremble. Soon the steel will fall from between your teeth, you will burst asunder the restraining thongs and come into your own.

Afraid! Afraid of so many things. Bless you, little woman! How young you are; how little you have learned in these years of the subtle, irresistible power which overwhelms all things. This child longs for a fairy god-mother to touch a thread and turn it to gold or brown; for the contact of a Venus' finger which might, perchance, smooth a line of care or thought. You, my little girl, you do not know, you have not learned that god-mothers and Venuses do not touch threads of gray or smooth a line to thrill the blood. Invisible, they put their transforming fingers on a heart, and eyes see not so long

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

as the million nerves of passion vibrate.

The picture you drew for me. Most of it I had beheld—you filled in the details, that was all. Your hand and brain are very cunning in their workmanship, but you had given me many glimpses of yourself and so there was not much for them to do on the canvas.

Have you seen as clearly the picture of my life? Can I do as little to complete it?

It has been as different from yours as the poles are far apart—you knew that. Where your life has been calm, mine has been turbulent. When you have been in smooth seas I have been fighting the hurricane. But I should have been unhappy—even as you—on the soft wave. I breathed hard and fast and my blood grew red and red and red in the gale and the overwhelming seas.

And she—she was not planned or meant for me. It was another slip, another error

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

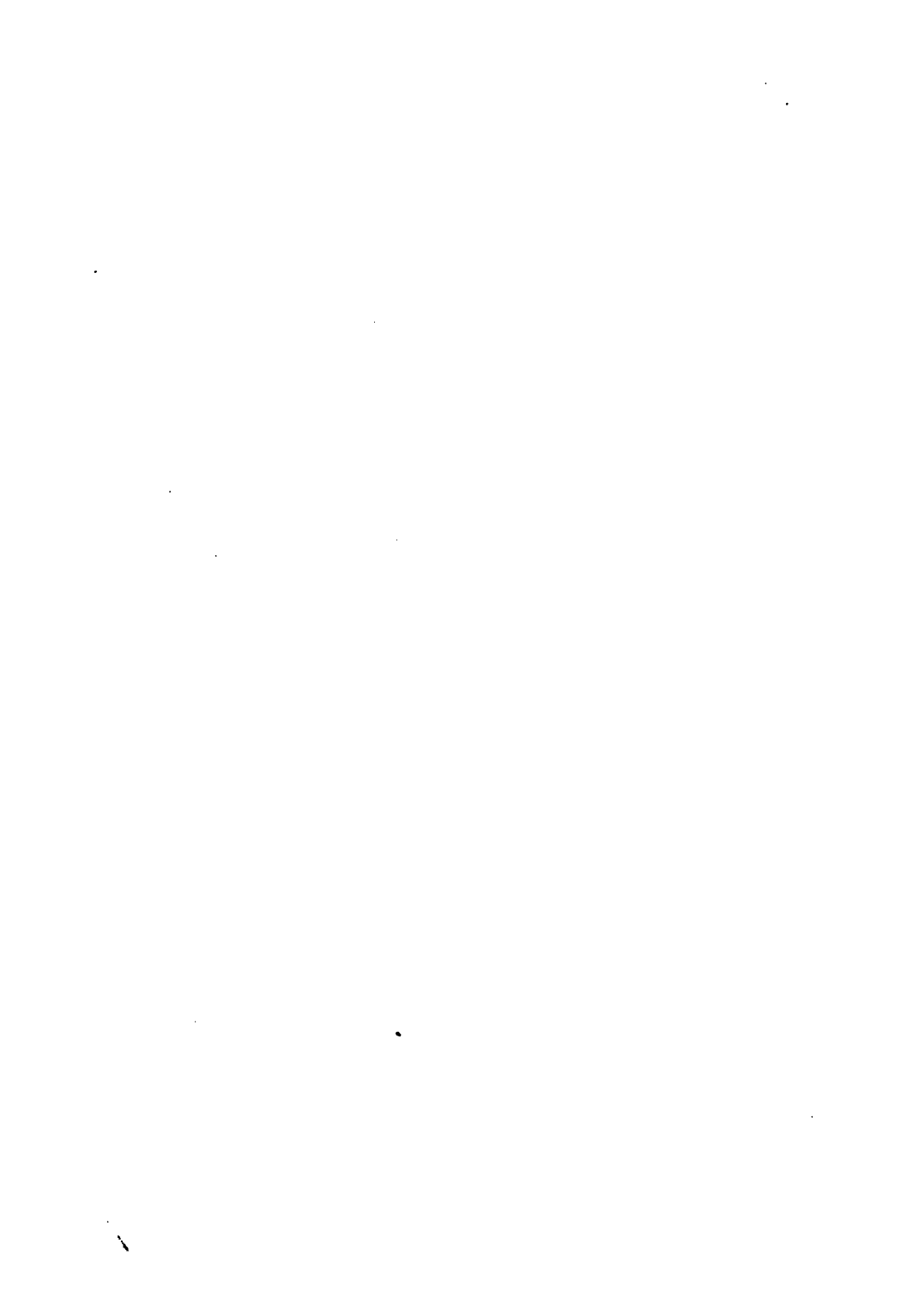
in the scheme of things. Had she married a man content to be the mate, content to sire and feed her sons and to do or think of nothing more, then would she have found the happiness which her gentleness and graciousness so eloquently bespeak as hers by every law that's just and righteous. I—I am cursed by the dual nature that must create, and, at the same time, mate. That is the chiefest reason why I said the other day that you and I, if we were much together, would talk frequently of suicide and engage in unreasonable combats—we are both creators. But between you and me there is the bond of mentality which overwhelms or neutralizes many things; which adjusts and co-ordinates the excesses and delinquencies that inevitably are alternating incidents of a purely physical ardour.

Again it is very late at night. During the few hours which remain until the time

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

arrives to begin another day of struggle and combat for the prizes which men so relentlessly seek, I should sleep and rest. Instead, I shall think and dream of you and tremble ceaselessly at thought of the touch of a hand that I have never seen; that through all time I have felt. When will you come to me, my Cave-woman?

Much, much, much I have to say to you  
—and I have said so little.



*From Her*

I DARE not read this last letter of your's a second time—yet....I wonder if you know that you are affecting me physically in the strangest manner; that I reel sometimes when I walk, like one arising from a long illness; that I find it impossible to take my natural portion of food. What have you done to me? Do you like this power, you Cave-man?

I am a very humble woman to-night. It is a new role. Perhaps it is for my punishment because I have been a very proud woman, one who has stood aloof, and, oft-times, apart. If it is a punishment, I kiss the rod.



## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

I have never thought that this was for me—this exultation of spirit. I have read of it; I have looked at others and wondered if their mid-summer madness were simulated. But as for me, it was written that I should stand outside. Sometimes I have been glad and sometimes I have felt cheated, tricked. To-night I know that the Fates have been kind and that the greatest thing in the world has happened to me. One day you will probably break my heart, but to-day you have given me a glimpse of a heaven more glorious than was ever dreamed of by the 'saints. I thank you that, even belated, you have come to me at last—that you have come to me in spirit—for I cannot, *dare* not admit even to myself that you shall ever, *ever*, EVER come to me in aught but—the spirit—of a past that for me, for me, was buried æons ago, buried back in the ages that cradled a race ruled by impulse, a race which had not

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

been leashed by reason and convention.

According to all the traditions I should be humiliated, not humble. I should shrink from the words—your words, that beat against me like blows. I should be shocked, horrified at what I have brought upon myself. But, instead, I am exulting, —yet withal filled with humility that I have not finally missed life's richest blessing. How much you have taught me in these brief days. A month ago all this would have been a sealed book to me. I should have withdrawn into the narrow chamber where my soul has sat in seclusion all these years looking on at the world through the mirror of The Lady of Chalcott. IS the curse to come upon me, too, for daring to turn my eyes upon a reality? And even as my mirror is shattered shall I, also, turn, resistless, and journey toward the living, pulsing reality? God help me!

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

I think you are the only real man I have ever known. To-day all men, save you, are to me as shadows. I think they have always been so. You, with your brutality which one endures with ecstasy, with your words which fall like caresses that burn; you, I recognize as real and my soul kneels to you. Ah, be content, I beg of you be content with the prostration of my soul—require no more.

Why did you suffer—what shall I say?—a wreck to occur in your life. You are not a sensual man, even though you conquer with words that no other man has dared set down on paper to woman, words which have shaken my being to the foundation and opened a vision of which I knew nothing. Somehow I have known about the other woman all along, intuitively. Poor other woman, to be apart from you—how can she endure it! I—I feel that your call would be more compell-

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

ing than any other in all the world—if it  
*could* be obeyed; *oh, if it* COULD.

*From Him*

**T**O-NIGHT I am exhausted, faint. A long way through the forest I have carried you, thrown across my shoulder, and the joy of the burden, the exhilaration of partial conquest, the thrill of anticipation steeled my sinews and I did not know that strength was wrenching itself from me. Now you are standing beside me—timid, fearful, to be sure; but withal, anxious, expectant, even hopeful, on the sward before my cave's entrance. Soon, ah, soon will awaken again the man-creature who caught you up over yonder by the sunrise. But now I gaze, like an old, warm friend, into your pupils and take your hand in

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

mine and touch your eyelids with my lips, softly, caressingly, even as one who has learned to be gentle in time of triumph, however primal in pursuit or battle.

Cave-woman, I am glad the journey is so nearly over; that we—you and I—can pause and rest and breathe for a moment. Strong as you think me, it has been a terrible fortnight, this battle with you and for you—God grant, not against you.

I have returned to my desk from the 'phone. Your voice, your voice! Always it arouses in me a spirit of unbridled rebellion. I leave the wire to brood over my impotence to do the things I so ardently desire to do. I grow sacreligious and wish that I were more than man. I long for power to annihilate distance that I might clasp you round your throat and draw you harshly, tenderly to me and reveal to you that you are—mine! mine!

How infinitely perfect it would be if I

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

could sit down with you there by the grate and talk to you after desires had spent themselves—for a while—and go mind-wandering with you into all the beautiful fields and valleys of thought through which we love to stroll.

Do you know I sometimes get low in spirits? No, you do not know, for it happens seldom and you have not known me in one of the moods. Sometimes I say "what is the use of it all; why struggle and sweat and endure under a multitude of burdens when the big, composite load can be put aside so rarely, and only for the briefest intervals?"

I get rebellious sometimes, for rewards come so seldom, so very seldom. Ah, if I could sit down day by day and talk with you when our minds were alert and have you and hold you when our hearts were aflame! Things are not adjusted rightly in this mad, glad world that we have to



## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

fight in. What are these laws of man and Nature which hold us apart, even for a few hours, when every nerve of our being is a-thrill and a-thirst for the intoxication of contact.

This is the mood your voice has put me in—I am a Cave-man rebellious now. I have the picture of you there at this hour which is to usher in the dawn, and you should be here. I have the vision of you alone, and I should be by your side; I see your white throat caressed by wayward ringlets of brown and my lips should be pressed to it; I see your body—my body—enveloped in the pulseless product of spindle and loom and it should be encircled by the pulsing arms of a lover-savage. Is it strange that I rebel? Tell me, is it?

To-night I was going to write a letter very different from this one. But your voice came to me from down yonder on the other side of the rivers and changed

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

the current of my thoughts. And you—you are glad it did. That is because you are a woman and I am a man. And I am glad that you are glad. That is because I am a man and you are a woman. Ah, the amazing complexity of these impulses. Try as we may, we cannot understand them. We can only accept, and rejoice or rebel. To-night I rebel. Soon I shall rejoice.

My Cave-woman, if you were here now, here with the man agitated to the profoundest depths of his being by the magic of your personality; if you were here now I would reveal to you what the conquest of a cave-man means. And your caressing lips and clinging arms and appealing eyes would plead for a fuller measure.

When will you come to me?

*From Her*

**O**H, this last, terrible letter of yours! It is like an imperious hand on my shoulder; a hand that has a cruel grasp, a hand which I would rather die than shake off, and yet, which, God help me! I must, *must*, **MUST** shake off.

Will you hold me fast whether I struggle or not, whether in a panic of fear I plead with you? I am afraid of you in this letter, but if I could—this midnight hour—I would fling myself into your arms and cling to you so closely, so tenderly that surely it would never, could never be in the heart of you to let me go.

How I would have fled from the ap-

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

proach of such a wooing even a short month ago! How it would have repelled, and roused every instinct of revolt!

What have you done, what have you done to me? You have jarred me out of all my preconceived ideas; you are like an iconoclast who throws down all one's idols—are you going to burn out the fire of your strange frenzy as soon almost as it is lighted and leave me nothing in the place of these new emotions? I wonder all these things, and of course you know no more than I what will be.

I must tell you that it may be a dangerous thing to arouse the whole nature of one such as I seem to be—this new ego. If your letters can have such power, what of the man—the real you, between whom and myself—pity me, in God's name pity me!—between whom and myself the space can never, must never be lessened?

But if it is as you say, something might-

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

ier than either of us, something inevitable that is flinging us into each other's arms, I—I—fear I have come almost to the crisis where nothing else in the world matters, nothing save you and your love, that I crave. I shall suffer for this—perhaps die, but at any rate, whatever befalls me for the sin of such a thought, or the recklessness, call it what you will, I must, I am willing to endure my fate.

Before I sleep this night I must feel again the wild thrill that overwhelms me when I allow imagination full rein—again I must read certain letters. How wonderful you are. Do you know that these messages of yours are masterpieces, not only of action, but of sustained force; a series of incomparable climaxes? There is nothing like them in the world. They respond to some voice that seems to have been crying in my soul for ages. They are something that while I am alive will have power to

## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

enthrall me, even when age shall have smothered the flame—I was about to write the consuming flame; *will* it consume me? —that is now enkindled by your words.

Always I am wondering—yes, I have gone so far that I dare to wonder—what it would be to have you close, close, with your voice in my ear, with the thrall of your presence enfolding me. Ah, if your written words can so move me, so enslave, what of your lips, your hands, your arms?

Oh, dear, dear one, if you can set down on paper living words and thoughts which will stir others as your messages thrill, aye, torture me with a frenzy of elation, then, mighty man that you are, you can achieve more than all the bards and poets of all the ages. Can you, can you do it? Or are your inexplicable appeals only for me, for me?

Early this evening I was reading Spencer a little while to steady my brain, to give

## AND HER'S IN REPLY

me a mental grip upon myself. Suddenly, as I was reading these lines "all impressions from moment to moment made on our organs of senses, stand in direct correlation with physical forces existing externally." As I was reading those lines which were the product of his middle life, some of his latest words, words said when he was old and feeble and weary, flashed before me though they were not in the book which slipped to the floor: "Love is the most interesting thing in the world. There is nothing like it."

Dear, wise, foolish old man who let his one chance of loving and being loved slip by and set himself to the task of framing a philosophy instead of finding a mate to love. Yet even he recognized the call.

Bless you for calling me this afternoon, my lover-savage. How gentle your voice is, dear. *Are* you so savage, so impetuous, or is it all in the letter and not in the spirit?



## HER CAVEMAN'S LETTERS

Ah, I cannot write more this after-midnight. I hide my face in the pillows and lose myself in a blissful, waking reverie. Good night, beloved, good morning.



*From Him*

**T**HIS last beautiful, inspiring, gentleizing letter of yours is resting on my knee. Ah, wonderful woman, how much you are, how much you have become to me. How infinite are your moods; and each, how replete with food alike for mind and pulse.

Since we came, in the glow of that burning sun, to the door of my cave home, I have been listening to the words of the woman I carried through the forest. As we have stood gazing with subdued ecstasy into each other's eyes, our feet almost upon the threshold, the woman in you has taught me many lessons which it is well

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for man to learn. As the fires in my brain burn brighter, as I draw her closer to me, the child awakens and asks questions again, questions as old as the race.

Listen, dear child of mine, soon you are to come to me—at the beginning of Time which had no beginning it was written so. In your woman's heart and mind you know that nothing but death can keep you from me nor me from you. You know it is the inevitable. You know, too, that every hour we are ever together will be far, far too short. You know, as well as I, that we—you and I—will ardently wish that we might lengthen each fleeting moment into days, years, ages. You know that with every hastening interval of time there will come to us a new sensation; some of them purely physical, many altogether intellectual, but each pregnant with profound gratification. You know that only in this variety of emotions can companionship be

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endurable. The man who awakens in you only mental alertness becomes tiresome; the man who arouses your desires alone, becomes repulsive.

The unexpected and amazing sympathies which have so strangely united our minds even though our bodies were far apart; the intellectual activities which we awaken in each other and the material life which each quickens for the other reveal the existence of perfect comradeship.

When we are together there will be hours in which our minds will dwell with keen pleasure on the little things of the world—the cut, it may be, of a woman's skirt, the stride of a cab horse, the harmony of vari-colored flowers, the melody of a song, the murmur of a brook, the soft, dumb expression of an animal's eye; hours when we will think together of larger things—the cause and effect of this or that phenomena, the reason of our being, the

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reason for our ceasing to be. Again some force which is not understandable will strike responsive cords in our material beings. Ah, this dream, this exquisite dream of communion, of companionship with you, heart of me!

"If I could set down on paper things which would stir others as my messages stir you, then I would achieve greater things than all the bards and poets who have lived," you wrote to me in this last wonderful letter of yours.

If I could do such a thing, my lover, I would not be a man, but a god. If I had for all the race such a message as I have for you, I would be an omnipotent, not a finite being. It is given to every man and every woman to awaken in one other the most powerful emotions of heart and mind. Then the measure of accomplishment is full. If God should sometime let loose in the world a man who could similarly af-

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fect the multitude, that man's "weight in human destiny would disturb the balance" (it was Hugo, I think, who said it of Bonaparte)—"and he would be destroyed by forces which of necessity would set themselves at work to restore the equilibrium."

No, dear one, my message, my call, is only for you, for you!—always, ever for you!

Are you faint and dizzy when you write to me, as I when I write to you? Heart of me, what will it be when you are in my arms; our lips together, clinging, thrilling as blood beats against blood;—what will it be then, soul of me?

I can scarcely see the tracings of my pen. My head is awlirl. The desire for you dims my eyes, palsies all the initiative energies of my brain. When will you come to me? When?



*From Her*

**I** BELONG to you. I say the words slowly, solemnly, as one enters upon a sacrament. You have known it all along. So have I, but I could not admit it to myself. So, enswathed as my sensibilities have been in the delirium of the last fortnight, I have tried to stifle the insistent beating of Certainty at the cobwebbed door of my heart.

It is useless. I shall struggle. I shall wear your patience, but always you will know that the covenant has been made—that you have me fast.

Hereafter there will be no pretenses between us. Write you there have been

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none? Your directness has been like a bludgeon. You will never know what the surrender means to me—go softly, dear, yet a little.

....I shall see you,—yes. Will you be patient? (I care so much, so much for you impatient—and yet—and yet)—Will you wait until I hold out my hands to you—I can live no longer until I feel the pressure of your arms—or will you make me hasten? Can you feel my heart throbbing in these lines? It is beneath your hand as you read.

Oh, my beloved, have you, in your terrible impetuosity, ever paused to think of the—the Afterward? When I obey you, as obey I must (such an enormity, such a terrible obedience, my lover-savage) what of the Afterward!

Are you going to weary of me?—after the manner of men as I have heard and read? How shall I live without you, then?

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Ah, you are different—tell me you are! I shall not lose you? Even if we shall never see each other after this one mad meeting—you will write to me, you will think—of me? Tell me, dear one! You have become a part of me—woven into the fabric of my being. I cannot imagine what life has been without you. It is as if always I had belonged—to you.

Ah, I will be so good to you, dear, so sweet.

*From Him*

**M**INE:—Never have I been so profoundly affected as I am now, at this sun-rise hour, after reading and re-reading your wonderful letter which was brought to me as the dawn was breaking.

All that you offer, all that you will, all that you can give, I accept. It is mine by every law that rules the lives and deeds of men.

But the dauphin who ascends a throne is less than man if he does not shudder; the conqueror who takes a realm is not of flesh if he does not tremble. The man to whom a noble, a wonderful woman has given all that in life or eternity he most

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desires must bow his head in awe as in humility, though he knows that by every right her heart, her soul, her body are his.

The covenant is made. The bond is sealed. The sacrament is administered.

You—are—mine. I—am—yours.

Soon you will come to me. In the ecstasy of it—ah, I know not what to say will be. For the first time since this wonderful thing has befallen us, it is hard for me to reach out and grasp words to send to you. In a supreme hour they become frail messengers.

I am in a constant reverie—oppressed, subdued, almost prostrated by an obsession of emotion; humble, as one who has witnessed a miracle—one who, but little understanding, has helped to work a miracle and then arisen to behold, almost in terror, the achievement of the impossible.

The Afterward! My Cave-woman, I do

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not know what the Afterward will be. I cannot know. It is the unknowable. I do not fear. I take no heed and am not afraid. My only hope, my only desire is that my mind, so long as my pulses throb, shall be inspired by your mentality and that again and again and ever again I may press my lips to your lips, your throat, your breast, and always until there is no longer breath to redden my blood.

And this now is to be the last message that I am to write ere I take you in my arms; ere we walk together in infinitely sweet accord through the doorway of my cave home; ere, on the pelt that was torn from a tiger dam, we offer, in the delirium of supreme love, our homage to the Fundamental Law which fathers a race of men.

And yet, even as the Cave-man's blood is afevered by contemplation of all that his mind and soul and body supremely desire; even in such an hour I am a very humble



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being. Brutal as my blows may have been in the heat of strife, in the awful struggle for conquest, I bend my knee before you and from the fullness of my heart of hearts tell you that you have conquered the victor. If you shall look into my eyes and ask me, in mercy, to spare; ask me even to carry you back yonder to the sunrise, I will obey, and, having obeyed the more than woman who has subdued me, hasten to assemble with the long forgotten line of my primordial sires.



*From Her*

**I** DID not suppose that a man lived in the world like you. I thought the race had perished with Richard Cœur-de-Lion, with DeGuesclin and Tristram and Paolo, and the men who knew how to love.

This last letter of yours! More compelling in its tenderness even than have been your stinging blows under which one suffers an inexplicable agony that gratifies the profoundest emotions of being! This last enthralling message from you! No woman who could inspire such a letter, or who dared read it when written, could reply except with her face buried against the breast of the man who wrote it,—

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with his arms crushing her—defenseless—to himself.

Oh, my darling! can you feel my cheeks burn against your brow, my more than lover? I am faint, trembling, falling. So gentle your voice was, so tender, so true, and yet I am shaking as a reed in the tempest, just at the sound. What if this wonderful thing had not come to us—to you and to me? What if I had never known, what if I had missed the one great thing in life?

I do not realize that it means as much to you as it does to me. I do not see how it *could* mean as much to a man who has *lived*, as a man like you must have lived; have eaten of the sweet and bitter of this earth. But if it *does* mean as much, then should I bow my head in still deeper humility because in some marvelous way our life threads have been intermingled.

Sometimes I feel that I am an early mol-

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lusk which has been collecting itself on the floor of the under-universe while there were real people up above, walking to and fro with human emotions and impulses and desires—and I never knew! What a lot of time I've wasted; and yet—and yet, maybe in the past you would have recognized no bond between us, and maybe, my lover-savage, while I was a mollusk I was saving up a long evolution of lives, by some inverse process, a long garnered treasure of passionate devotion, a hoard of undiscovered riches—for you, for you. By some intuitive inner sense I feel that I have a great deal to give you—far more than you imagine, and I tell you now—at the threshold of your, *our* cave home—there is no grudging in the giving. It is yours—all—everything. No, I do not want to go back yonder—it was the sunrise *then*, not now.

To-night, the night before the day, I

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cannot sleep. With each fleeting moment I am shaken with conflicting emotions—now terror, now exultation claims; exultation that someone cares for me, yes, desires me. Oh, how wonderful, how enthralling—to be desired. I have had vague dreams of such possibilities—with two who were supremely adapted to each other. I have had visions of a union where the highest type of communion of mental attributes might be united with the most subtle physical attraction, but I did not believe it existed outside a dream, more than all, existed for me.

Over and over again, I say to you what have you done to me? And the marvel of it grows not less with the lapse of time or the swift, yet ever slow approach of the hour. No incarnation of the Hindoos could be one-half so inexplicable, half so transcendental. It is as if some alien spirit of fire had been created within me to eat my

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heart out with longing, to wither every growth of self, to make me one with you "*un alma en dos cuerpos.*"

And I am ignorant; ah, so ignorant—as soon you will find out. But it will be infinitely sweet to learn of you—everything, everything.





## **THE AFTERWARD**

*From Her*

...  
Nora in the  
happy - merely a  
...





DEAR "YOU":—

This is not a letter—  
only a Christmas rose of greeting  
that I painted for you in—*remembrance*.

You do not need my cheer with your  
babies at your knee this Christmas tide  
. . . . I write because I am lonely. Like  
Nora in Ibsen's "Doll's House," I am not  
happy—merely merry. I wish for you all  
gladness.

E. V. P.













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